

Testimony in Support of S.B 284, AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.

Dear Chairs Abercrombie and Moore, Vice Chairs Lesser and Leeper, Ranking Members Berthel and Case, and Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Aparajita and I am a resident of New Haven. I'm writing to communicate my strong support for **S.B. 284 - An Act Increasing the Age from Eight to Eighteen Years for an Income-Eligible Person to Obtain Medical Assistance Regardless of Immigration Status**. This bill would provide state-funded medical assistance to any child or young adult under the age of eighteen years of age, regardless of immigration status, whose household income does not exceed two hundred one percent of the federal poverty level, and who does not otherwise qualify for Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance 11 Program, or employer-sponsored insurance.

Connecticut's expansion of HUSKY last year to children ages 0-8 years was an important win for immigrants in the state, who have been predominantly challenged by the shortage of healthcare resources available to them. The passage of S.B 284 would expand this win by guaranteeing more access to programs like HUSKY that largely benefit low-income immigrant families and individuals. Undocumented immigrants without coverage must rely on health care safety net resources, such as public hospitals or community clinics, to access needed medical care. Despite serving as important access points, none of these resources is equivalent to having comprehensive health insurance coverage.

Connecticut's undocumented immigrant population has recounted stories of being turned away for lifesaving treatments and preventive services, encountering discrimination and racism while seeking health care, and fear of being arrested while trying to get help. This is highly unjust given that they pay millions of dollars in local and state taxes every year to fund the health coverage programs that they're excluded from. In fact, Undocumented immigrants in our state pay roughly 145 million dollars into state and local taxes every year, 253 million into federal taxes, out of that 54.6 million goes into medicare and 207.4 million goes into social security according to a study conducted by the New American Economy. Undocumented taxpayers are contributing to the state's health programs, but their status makes them ineligible to access said state health programs.

Health is ingrained in every aspect of our lives from having glasses to see in class to being able to wake up and go to work to help support your family. Access to healthcare affects several sectors of life and thus it is absolutely necessary that CGA takes proactive steps to expanding HUSKY coverage.

In conclusion, I urge you to expand healthcare to the immigrant population because it would allow them to receive the preventative treatment they deserve, reduce the uninsured rate in Connecticut, and save the state money by decreasing uncompensated care costs. Connecticut can and should do better in promoting healthcare as a human right, rather than a commodity that only the wealthy can afford. I urge you to favorably vote this bill out of the Human Services

Committee so that more immigrants in the state are able to access and afford health care that they're in desperate need of.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Aparajita Kaphle
New Haven, CT